

[774] from which there is only one story of a return, that of Milimili who was assisted by the gods, Tulikalo and Tangata-no-te-moana.

[775] When a new soul became finally imprisoned in the Underworld, it was welcomed by all its deceased relatives, who came forward and provided a feast for the new spirit. There were no class distinctions in the Po; hence there was no special reception or treatment for a chief. Spirits did not grow old or mature in the Po. People who died old were looked after by relatives who had died young. Babies never grew up. The old cared for the children, and the young men and women provided food for the rest of the community.

[775] Final knowledge of the Underworld before white contact was derived from a visit of the seer Levi:

[539] One night Levi heard certain sounds of strange music which he diagnosed as slit gong beats of a rhythm unknown on Pukapuka. The music was obviously coming from two wooden gongs played by a skilled musician. Levi decided to follow this strange music, so (in a trance) his soul left his body and journeyed to the Underworld. It came to the place where the gods were merrily dancing to the rhythms of Tulikalo. Levi watched in admiration the skill displayed by this god as he beat out the most intricate rhythms. Levi admired also the beautiful gong sticks of polished ironwood and longed to possess these for himself. Levi drew near the god, and, profiting by a sudden diversion of attention, snatched the sticks from the place where Tulikalo had laid them, and sped back to Pukapuka. Avoiding all entanglements, Levi duly arrived on Wale. In the morning he showed the sticks to the people, explaining how he came into possession of them. One stick was later lost, but the other is in Pukapuka today, doing duty as a knife handle.

MAGIC

[789] The use of black or white magic in Pukapuka was apparently extremely rare in former days. Most of the many references to white magic in the stories refer to the power exercised by the gods to protect or otherwise serve their worshippers. The gods were communicated with and asked to do these favors through the ordinary method of prayer (*takutaku*). The priest Pakai is said to have procured favors from his god by making some use of *welo* bark streamers on his headdress, but whether these streamers were used as a sort of bait object, no informant could tell. Two examples of white magic involving the use of bait objects are found among the stories: Vaetuanu endows a coconut midrib with the power of speech by spitting into a coconut cup which he places on the midrib; the chief Tuyiyauola, in Yayake, has a woman bear him a child by putting some of his semen in a coconut cup and floating it over the water to the woman who rubs it over her body (p. 381).

No white magic technique was remembered by informants. The Polynesian word *hauaki* is not found in the Pukapukan dialect. The word *talotalo*, however, means an incantation, in the sense of a spell which magically causes a desired result. The only example of a *talotalo* that informants could recall was the one used by Yinata to put together again the tree chopped down by

789 Lata (1). As has already been mentioned, little use was made of white magic in economic activities.

793 The only black magic indulged in seems to have been based on suggestion; no bait objects were used. A priest might silently or orally curse a man with sickness, or else pray to his god either to send an evil substance to eat out an enemy's vitals or send an evil familiar spirit, the spirit of one newly dead, for instance, to enter a man for the same purpose. This was done solely through the power of the priest to communicate with the god and not by using or working upon material objects. When it was known that a man had been thus mentioned to a god by a priest, the man would sicken unless he could get another priest to apply to another god for counter-protection.

795 Mention has been made (p. 328) of the nooses (*matapili*) that Wotoa and Te Yon saw hanging from the *puka* tree of Tangi which were used to trap and strangle spirits. Gill reports that he procured from Pukapuka an "erevaeva" (soul trap), which was used by the priests in the upper world to trap the souls of living victims (pl. 6). Gill (10, p. 181) writes:

794 If a person had the misfortune to offend the "sacred men", or were very ill, a soul-trap would be suspended by night from a branch of one of the gigantic laurel trees (*puka*) overshadowing his dwelling. If the family enquired "the sin for which the soul-trap was set up," some ceremonial offense against the gods would of course be assigned. The priest would sit opposite watching. If an insect or small bird chanced to fly through one of the loops, it was asserted that the soul of the culprit, assuming this form, had passed into the trap. The demon *VAERUA*,²⁰ or "spirit" presiding over the spirit world, was believed to hurry off the unlucky soul to the shades, to feast upon. It would speedily be known throughout the island that So-and-so had lost his soul, and great would be the lamentation.

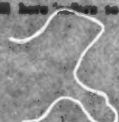
The friends of the unhappy man would seek to propitiate the sorcerer by large presents of food and property, begging him to intercede with dread *VAERUA* for the restoration of the soul. This was sometimes accomplished; but at other times the priests reported that his prayers were unavailing, and *VAERUA* could not be induced to send back the spirit to reinhabit the body. The culprit fully believing all that the priest said—was he not the mouth-piece of the gods, and cognizant of the secrets of the spirit-world?—gave up all hope. His friends mourned over him as one dead; and at last the poor fellow faded away through sheer mental distress at having his spirit ensnared.

In cases of mere sickness, where the friends were anxious to know whether the sick man would get well again, if the priest reported that his spirit did not enter the snare, it was inferred that he would recover.

I enquired why some of the loops were so large, whilst others were so small. The "sacred-men" said to me, testily, "Don't you know that there are different sorts of souls—some small and others large?" I understood him to mean that the large loops were to entrap the souls of adults, the smaller ones to catch the souls of infants. The words used would imply that the large loops were for the souls of chiefs, and the small ones for the souls of common people.

The Pukapukan for *ere vaeva* would be *yale vaeva* (noose spirit-like or spirit-like noose), but the word *vaeva* would rarely be used in this sense; a

²⁰ Presumably Gill here refers to the departmental god, Te Atua Vaeva.



775 more correct name would be *yelo manli*. Many informants were repeatedly
 774 questioned about this soul trap, separately and together, and all agreed that
 114 Gill must have confused a bird trap or bird noose which he saw hanging to
 754 a tree with the story he heard of the *matapili* noose in the Underworld. One
 type of bird noose, *yelo manu* (fig. 4.b), consisted of loops of sennit sus-
 pended from a *puka* tree. It is significant that Gill talks about a birdlike
 representative of a soul passing into the *ere vosvwa*. It is likely, I think,
 that in order to blacken the past, a convert made for Gill what he said was a
 soul trap. From the old chant, "Maka taku kupu ko te tonoaanga", infor-
 mants quoted the following phrases to confirm their point that the noose was
 used in the Underworld only:

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Na yelea ko te talakelake
 Wakawiwai ake te mauhi, kon 'mate, kua
 cio
 Wakatamili ai tama i te pu o te puka a
 Tangi,
 Wakandu ko te wale pontini . . .

You were tied to the *talakelake* tree
 (Your) soul was tangled (in the trap),
 died, stank,
 We were both thrown to the foot of the
puka tree of Tangi,
 Entered the house of a thousand posts
 (the house of Leva) . . .

If the soul trap was really an instrument of witchcraft, as Gill was
 assured, then it acted through the force of suggestion. The priest did not
 work over the insect or bird that passed through the noose with incantations
 in order to provoke sickness or death.

789 Several informants were questioned on different occasions as to their
 knowledge of black magic. Examples of black magic in western Europe
 were adduced to give them confidence, but even this lead got no results.
 754 Even if informants have willfully forgotten material on sorcery which must
 to them smack of heathen practices, one might expect some survival of pre-
 cautions directed against sorcery in the treatment of objects closely con-
 nected with the person. But the Pukapukan customs governing the disposal
 of objects charged with high personality tension, as compared with customs
 elsewhere in Polynesia, where fear of sorcery led to rigorous tapus or the dis-
 posal of such objects, indicate that there was extremely little fear of sorcery
 in Pukapuka:

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The sea took care of adult excreta, and of most child excreta; no precautions are
 taken today to dispose of excreta of children too young to go to the sea. Adults expec-
 torate anywhere. Finger and toe nails are cut anywhere; formerly they were bitten
 off and spat out onto the ground. According to informants, the hair was rarely cut
 during life, and was worn long by both sexes. Some informants said that hair clippings
 were buried; others said that hair was often cut from a dead person, particularly from
 the head of a deceased favorite child, and the hair plaited into a *malu* or else into a cord
 by which pearl-shell ornaments were hung on the breast. Formerly, if a woman's hair
 fell into food, the food was considered spoiled by this contact. When a tooth pained,
 it was pulled out, taken to the god house of the lineage and deposited there with a
 prayer to the god of the lineage that he send a new tooth to replace the one thus given
 to the god. Old clothes were burned or used as rags. Today clothes are worn to rags

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2. [See p. 64, category 116 — anal. hist.]